pearing more or less rapidly, mostly in favor of Amharic. 6 191
They include Argobba, Adare or Harari, Gurage, Gafat. 197

2. The Land.

A. Geographical Location.

The Empire of Ethiopia(south of Eritrea) is located in 131
the northeastern part of Africa, roughly between 5° and 15° north latitude, and 33° -43° east longitude. Prior to the federation of Eritrea in 1952, which added about 45,000 sq. miles and brought access to the Red Sea, Ethiopia had 350,000 sq. miles of landlocked territory. It was roughly the size of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.

It is a mountainous kingdom, separated from the Red Sea 133
and the Gulf of Aden on the northeast and the Indian Ocean on the southeast by hot lowland deserts; a steep escarpment borders all along the western area down to the hot lowland of the Sudan. This mountain fortress type of landscape has enabled the plateau people to retain their independence against would-be invaders.

Today the political territory of Ethiopia is divided into 631
12 administrative provinces (Taqlai Gezat), each under a Governor-General appointed by the Emperor. Each province is subdivided into several(usually six) sub-provinces (Awrajja Gezat), ruled by a governor similarly appointed.

Three of the 12 provinces are Amharic-speaking; the 191
national language has recently become the lingua franca for the larger centers of population in the other provinces also.

B. Climate, Climatic Zones, and Topography. 132

Climate and topography are closely inter-related in

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

137 most border areas of the country. This is the zone of desert and thorn shrub vegetation; flora include the tamarind, giant sycamore, acacia, myrtle and zizygium, "Insett" (musa ensete or "Koba"), euphorbia, depending on availability of water. Crops include cotton, tobacco, dura, sugar cane. Poisonous snakes, leopards, malarial mosquitoes are common, and therefore the qolla is avoided by upland peoples like the Amhara. The qolla is loosely populated by hardy nomads like the feared Danakil in the east, and by Nilotic-speaking and negroid peoples like the Shanqalla in the western lowland.[3]

● 133 Much of Ethiopia is a subtabular plateau about 7,000 feet high, bisected north and south by a sector of the Great Rift Valley of East Africa with an average width of 30 miles. Rivers such as the Blue Nile have cut deep gorges breaking the highland into many isolated parts. Above the plateau rise higher mountains, the highest of which is 14,500 feet--Ras Dashan(Bejeda).

487 133 The many steep canyons which break up the plateaus have made Ethiopia almost inaccessible in the past. There are only three possible routes of access, an important consideration when one tries to reconstruct the ethnic prehistory of this area:

(1) The Eritrean gateway, where the highland approach

3. See Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook, 1954, pp. 127-8; KUO, 1955, p.1-2; Simmons 1951, p. 63

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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133 the sea. It is here, as C. S. Coon points out,[4] that all the historic traffic between the Ethiopian highlands and Yemen has taken place; here lie all the ancient cities and holiest places. Semitic-speaking influences came this way.

(2) Sailing down the Nile with the north wind, and continuing south past the gorges of the Blue Nile. Despite the hardships of this route, Egypt has often been a source of cultural influence on Ethiopia, and once an Ethiopian dynasty reigned over Egypt. Today, Nilotic-speaking tribes live on this gateway.

(3) A route from the south, at the place where the highland of Ethiopia connects with the grasslands and parklands of Kenya and Uganda. Here we find a continuum of flora and fauna, and a human ethnic continuum. Cushitic-speaking peoples have entered this way, probably for ages past.

C. Soil and Minerals

134 The soil of Ethiopia can be roughly divided into three major types:

(1) Decomposed volcanic rock on the central plateau. This is very fertile, of black or dark brown color.

(2) Alluvial soil on the flood plains of streams. This is derived mainly from the decomposed volcanic rock, washed out of the plateau soil during the rainy season, and is very fertile. Muddy in color, the rich overflow of Lake Tana is

4. Coon, C. S.: Horn of Africa. Unpublished.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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ETHIOPIAN HIGHLANDS

W. E. D. ALLEN

Meeting of the Society, 18 January 1943

114 THIS lecture does not pretend to be a serious study of any geographical aspect of Ethiopia. It is rather a record of impressions gained during a year spent in Ethiopia in various jobs ranging from the care of a park of derelict mules to that of Intelligence Officer to the newly formed Ethiopian Army.

Unluckily I was posted away from Addis Ababa at short notice, and my reference books in Italian and Italian photographs of ethnological interest which I had collected should now be in Nairobi, if they have not been lost. Many of the photographs used as illustrations were taken in the field by Captain Mark Pilkington, the Life Guards, a very gallant officer who distinguished himself in the guerrilla fighting round Lake Tana and who was killed in action in Libya, just two months ago.

With the possible exception of parts of the Shankalla wilderness, which is the Abyssinian extension of the Sudan plain between the western bend of the Blue Nile and the Escarpment, it cannot be said that any large areas of the Ethiopian Empire had remained unvisited by Europeans prior to the Italian War of 1935–36 and the campaign of 1941. I have however come across no account of the remarkable massifs of Dungwur and Belaia which rise out of
● 133 the Shankalla plain to the east of the Escarpment. On the tableland of Belaia, well within the nominal Italian frontier, an advance base for the supply of the Patriot forces was established in January 1941 and in February the Emperor set up his headquarters there.

[137] These twin mountain masses rise out of the Shankalla plain to an altitude of about 7000 feet above sea-level. They are covered with rich forests and watered by fast-running streams. Dungwur was uninhabited and visited
[361] only from time to time by stray bands of Abyssinian hunters. But there are flourishing villages and ancient churches on Belaia. It was a weird experience to reach these strange islands of luxuriating nature after the long camel trek across the burnt-out Shankalla wilderness. From a day's march away we

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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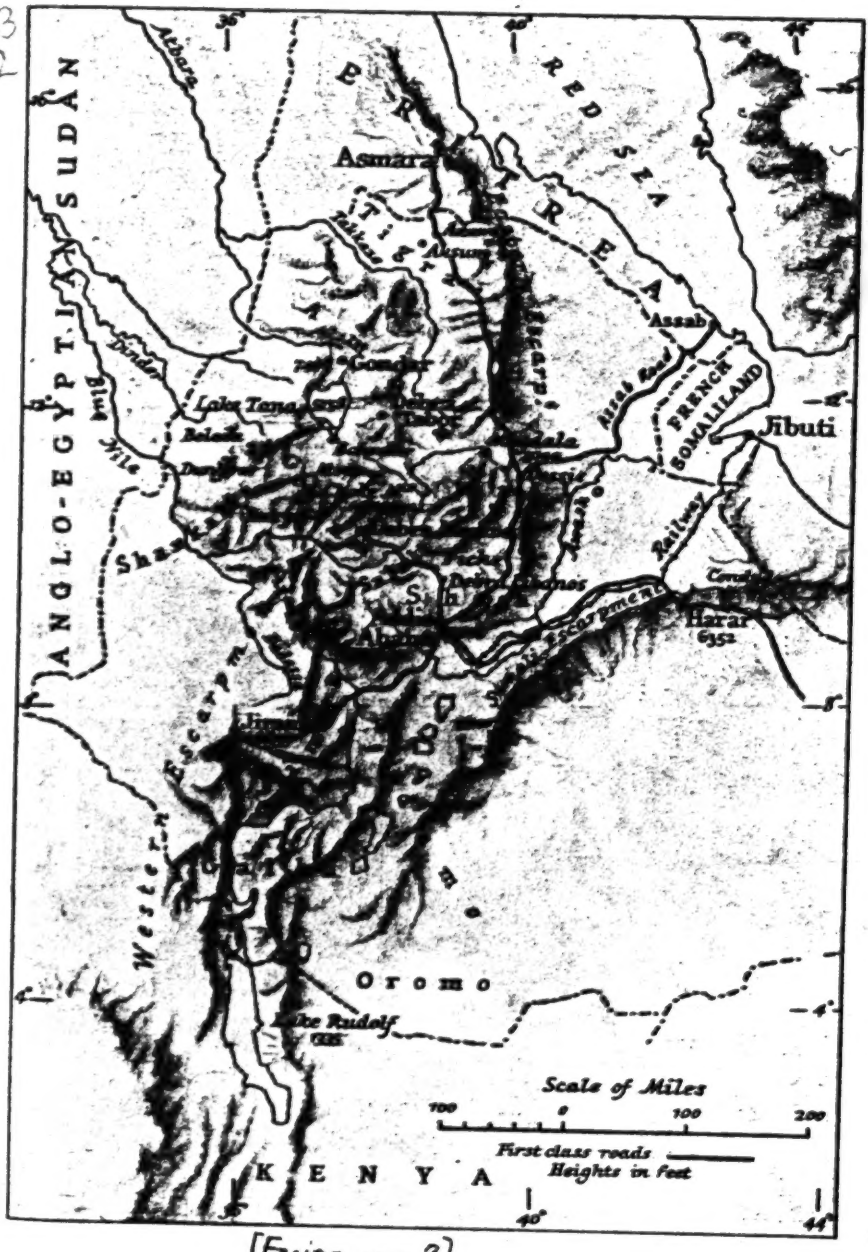

[Facing page 2]

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

133 could see the forests blazing on the flanks of Belaia from the bombs dropped by the Savoias in their unsuccessful attempts to search out the Emperor's camp.

The wooded flanks of the Western Escarpment of the Ethiopian plateau overlook the plains of the Sudan. The top of the Escarpment is 4000–5000 feet above sea-level, and the gap opposite Mambuk village which we climbed is about 2000 feet above the level of the Shankalla plain, which rises steadily in a series of low rocky corrugations all the way from the Dinder river some 100 miles to the west. From the top of the Escarpment the fertile plains of Gojjam stretch for another 100 miles to the canyon of the Blue Nile. There is a fall of about 5000 feet to the great ravine with its subtropical vegetation from the dusty upland round Debra Markos. From the western edge of the Blue Nile Scarp it is a whole day's march down to the river for loaded animals, and more than a day's march up the eastern bank on to the Salale plateau at Shafartak.

The Ethiopian Highland is a series of plateaux separated by deep canyons such as that of the Blue Nile. The eastern edge of the Highland is the western edge of the great African rift. There is a parallel rift from lake Tana along the canyon of the Blue Nile to the Southern Lakes of Ethiopia and it is continued through the East African lake system down to lake Tanganyika. A series of north–south and east–west faults divide up the Ethiopian highland into separated plateaux. The Awash valley, running west–east, and really connecting the north–south rifting with the Red Sea basin, flows in the most notable of these. The different plateaux are sometimes connected by narrow necks of land or panhandles: for instance the neck connecting the plateau of Debra Zebit with that of Debra Tabor is hardly more than 100 yards across with a sheer drop south-west to the ravine of the Bashilo and north to that of the Gash or Takkaze.

133 These peculiar geographical conditions explain much in Ethiopian history.
177 The great line of the Escarpment, overlooking the Red Sea depression on the
648 east and the Sudan plains to the west, has protected the population of the uplands from penetration by foreign armies until modern times. The only successful conquest of Ethiopia was that of Muhammad Gran, the "left-handed," a Somali chieftain who is reputed to have had an Ethiopian father. The Somali-Arab armies which were really the spearhead of Turkish imperialism on the Red Sea in the great days of the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century, penetrated the Ethiopian Highland by the Awash valley in a series of campaigns which lasted for about half a century. In the end the great altitudes and the inclement rainy seasons probably restored their independence to the Ethiopians. In general, it may be said that the Highlanders have never been able to conquer and hold the hot lowlands of the Red Sea and the Arabs and Somalis have never been able to maintain themselves on the upland plateau. Only in the subtropical region of the southern lakes as far as the Dadessa valley and Jimma has there been any important penetration of Islamic influences.

133 Foreign influences, Semitic and that peculiar early Ethiopian or Eritrean
177 civilization known as Aksumite, have come in from the north over the easier

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Fudi, near Njabara, Gojjam

Phot. L. V. Bentinck

Debra Libanos, 1928

[Facing p. 3]

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

grade from the Eritrean plateau. All civilization in Ethiopia has penetrated from north to south along the great dorsal ridge of the Eastern Escarpment, where the so-called Strada Imperiale now runs from Asmara to Addis Ababa.

Along this line have been concentrated the successive Ethiopian capitals with the exception of Gondar, which was chosen far to the north-west as a refuge from the ruinous wars with the Moslems and the Gallas. And along this line, due south from Aksum and Aduwa, were the great centres of the Copto-Ethiopian culture of the Middle Ages, places like Lalibala and the monasteries on lake Haik and the traditional centre of the Coptic Church at Debra Libanos.

From this dorsal ridge of the Eastern Escarpment Ethiopian culture, and it was a very real culture in its heyday, spread westward into Gojjam and southward to the region of the lakes. Luca di Sabelli in his recent 'Storia di Abissinia' has shown that Coptic-Ethiopian missionaries were active as far south as Madagascar and the Mozambique coast.

Ethiopian Coptic culture drew its nurture from the powerful Coptic Church in Cairo, from the Crusading civilization in Palestine, and from the Byzantine Empire. Just as the establishment of the Turks at the exit from the Black Sea brought about the decline of the East Christian cultures in the Caucasus and the Balkans, so the Turkish control of the Nile valley and the Red Sea slowly strangled the Coptic Ethiopian culture of East Africa. The Ethiopian rulers, pressed by the invasions of Muhammad Gran, were well aware of their mortal danger and it is a curious fact that kings in Georgia and Ethiopia appealed to the rising power of Spain in the Western Mediterranean at about the same time. The Portuguese episode in Ethiopia was a delayed response to the appeal made to the Catholic powers.

The extraordinary tenacity of the Ethiopians to the western tradition is a remarkable characteristic of their historical development. The Aksumite kingdom, for all its Semitic appearance, was essentially a projection of Hellenism, and the Aksumite kings remained the traditional allies of the Byzantine Emperors in their struggle with the Persian Sasanids for the control of the Red Sea—an episode which was parallel in time with the conflict between these same two "world powers" for mastery of the Black Sea. The Coptic Church and Christian civilization in East Africa proved more enduring than the once powerful Nestorian Church in Asia, with which it may in some ways be compared. The later Ethiopian Kingdom played the same role in the struggle between Turks and Portuguese for control of the Red Sea and for the trade of the Indian Ocean as the Aksumites had a thousand years earlier in the rivalry between Byzantines and Persians. But they showed the same persistent antagonism to the Roman Church as the East Christians had displayed towards the Crusaders and the Papacy. In the end the Ethiopians expelled the Portuguese from Abyssinia and managed to maintain their own independence against their Moslem neighbours, until in the last decade it was suppressed by a professedly Christian power.

The Ethiopians are a remarkable phenomenon in the East African world and with their tenacity and their undoubted natural intelligence they are destined to have no little influence on the future course of history in that area.

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Gojjam

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Camp at Matakal, Gojjam, complete air cover for standing camp along wooded wady

[Facing p. 4]

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

tunity for geographical observation. The vegetation was really fantastic. Along the higher slopes of Choké giant red-hot pokers stretched for miles. Rather lower the ground was carpeted with violets and beautiful mosses. There were bushes of heather growing higher than the height of a man, and a variety of lichens. In the silence of the mountains in the early morning mists, the atmosphere strangely recalled parts of Ireland or the North Cornish coast. It was a fitting background for the magical beliefs and the immaterial psyche of the Ethiopians, which the more matter-of-fact European finds difficult to comprehend.

It was interesting to note that at about 11,000 feet there appeared to be a sort of fly-line. The flies, which are a constant pest round Debra Markos at 9000 feet, entirely disappeared and only appeared again on the incline down to Mota and the Blue Nile.

There were only two or three villages along the track, which of course is a new one, but collections of huts were fairly frequent over the lower slopes, particularly on the incline to the Blue Nile. Cultivation was maintained up to about 12,000 feet. I gather from a book on the Heights of Simen (to the north-east of the Gondar area) that there is a flourishing farming life at the same altitudes in that region. Grazing was magnificent and live stock were notably well conditioned by comparison with the animals of the Debra Markos district.

Colonel Boustead's force continued from Mota to Bahrdar at the southern tip of Lake Tana, where they made contact with the small mixed group of Abyssinians, Sudanese, and British under Major Simmonds. The march was continued in the direction of Debra Tabor, the former capital of Ras Gugsa Wolye, which the Italians had made into a major defended locality—the base for a line of dependent forts strung out along the road which linked Dessie on the Strada Imperiale with Gondar. Conditions remained difficult at an altitude of over 9000 feet in the first weeks of the so-called Little Rains which break in May.

Meanwhile a force of one company of Sudanese and one company of a newly formed Ethiopian battalion with a few British officers and N.C.Os. under Colonel Wingate, O/C Gojjam Force, was following the retreating garrison of Debra Markos. About eight thousand of these had survived the operations in Gojjam and they had retired across the Blue Nile, blowing up the Shafartak bridge, and were making for Magdala and Debra Tabor across the mountains which lie to the east of the Blue Nile and to the north of the main road from Debra Markos to Addis Ababa. Harassing operations were kept up throughout the month of May and, when two thousand of Ras Kassa's Shoans joined in, Colonel Wingate was strong enough to bring the enemy to a general action. The affair was decided when Bimbashi Thesiger, by a remarkable 50-mile march in twenty-four hours over hostile country, seized a panhandle connecting two plateaux along which the Italians were intending to retreat. As a result the remnants of the fifty-one enemy battalions stationed in the Gojjam surrendered at Agibar, about four months after the Emperor had set up his original headquarters at Belaia.

All this country on the marches of the ancient kingdoms of Shoa and Amhara was relatively little known before the Italian occupation. I refer to

? i.e., in the Choké Mountains. -Awake?

? i.e. between Debra Markos and Mota. -Ed.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

the triangle of mountains bounded on the north by the Dessie–Debra Tabor road; on the west by the canyon of the Blue Nile; on the east by the Strada Imperiale; and on the south by the Debra Markos–Addis Ababa road. Here Ras Kassa's Shoan fief of Salale adjoins his territories in Amhara Saint. Salale is a great grassy upland, in May already swept by rain storms for six or eight hours a day. The road to Addis Ababa passes through Ras Kassa's capital of Fiche, which has the usual character of Abyssinian country towns: an agglomeration of huts standing in rather dreary eucalyptus groves and dominated by a fort and the European villa of the Ras. Salale has the reputation of being the best horse-raising country in Abyssinia.

Fiche has a certain strategic importance in the feudal politics of Abyssinia since it lies across the main line of communication between the capital and Gojjam; and in the period of *coup d'états* in the '20s the lord of Salale was always in the position to intervene suddenly in the capital only 70 miles away.

Ras Kassa has always maintained his loyalty to the Makonnen house. He is a magnificent old veteran of war and politics, rugged and erect in spite of his advanced years. Ras Kassa's two elder sons, who had come in to discuss a truce with the Italians some months after the fall of Addis Ababa in 1936, were executed under circumstances of abominable treachery. Nevertheless the old Ras made himself responsible for the escort of the Agibar prisoners over about 150 miles of country without a single one of them coming to any harm.

I was fortunate in June and July in spending some time in Dessie and in making my way up to the Debra Tabor district where, in mid-July, the Italian garrison of some six thousand men surrendered. Dessie, which means "my joy" in Amharic, is an ideal base from which to study the incomparably beautiful country round. The former capital of Ras Michael, the Moslem father of the ex-Emperor Lij Iyasu, Dessie became the northern military headquarters of the Empire during the years preceding the Italian conquest. Dessie was favourably situated in relation to the Italian frontier in southern Eritrea, but it owed its strategic importance to the inner political situation. To the east and north-east along the line of the Eastern Escarpment overlooking the Danakil Depression and the Red Sea basin is the country of the turbulent Wagara Gallas who were, and who remain, a recurrent threat to internal security. The Wagara clans in fact lie athwart the main south–north route from Addis Ababa to Aduwa and the new and hardly less important motor road down the Escarpment and across the Danakil desert to Assab. During the years 1929–31, each autumn after the Great Rains, the Emperor had not less than thirty thousand men in the field engaged in more or less fruitless marches and counter-marches over the highlands of the Wagara country.

Scarcely less formidable were the great conservative lords of the north: Ras Gugsa of Makale, who afterwards went over to the Italians; Ras Seyum of Tigrai, ruling all the country between the upper Takkaze and the Eritrean border; and Ras Gugsa Wolye of Debra Tabor, an ex-husband of the Empress Zawditu, who himself had pretensions to the throne and the support of the powerful centre of the Coptic priesthood in Aduwa.

The last great feudal campaign in Ethiopia took place in 1931. The Im-

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

perial Army, recruited largely from the non-Amharic southern region of Galla-Sidamo, advanced from Dessie and met the feudal levies of the pretender on the plateau of Debra Zebit. A great head-on encounter of over thirty thousand riflemen and spearmen took place along a front extending over 10 km. A lucky reconnaissance by the Emperor's two French Potez planes was probably the decisive episode in the battle. Somewhere in the mêlée Ras Gugsa Wolye was dragged from his mule and hacked to pieces. This last epic contest of feudal lords recalls one of the battles of the Wars of the Roses.

Dessie itself has something of the character of an alpine *Kurort*, and the Italians intended to develop it as such. When I was there the fairly numerous Italian colony was being removed to Asmara, and it was obvious that the town was gradually reverting to the untidy agglomeration of huts and shanties which is all the easy-going Ethiopian countryman requires in a town.

The surrounding grassy *alms* are the finest stock-raising country in Africa. Between the surrounding peaks of the uplands I have ridden for 3 or 4 miles over turf as flat as a race-course. I had the pleasant task of running a reception camp for surrendered Italian mules and ponies, and I was free to spend a good deal of time in the saddle under fresh wind-swept skies which recalled an English June.

The road from Dessie to Debra Tabor descends and ascends the canyon of the Bashilo and crosses the plateau of Debra Zebit. Magdala, the fortress capital of the Emperor Theodore, lies to the south-west, and the route from the Bashilo to Debra Zebit is the reverse of that taken by Napier in 1868, when he made his remarkable march up from the Red Sea. After Debra Zebit the route crosses the panhandle which forms the watershed between the Bashilo flowing to the Blue Nile and the northward-flowing Takkaze. Farther on towards Debra Tabor, with the incline down to the Lake Tana basin, the vegetation becomes richer. Snipe abound and are so tame that they could almost be killed with a stick.

In the mountains to the south-east of Debra Tabor is the curious anarchic community known as the Republic of Gaint, whose people claim to recognize no authority. The late Captain Pilkington and Captain McLean, who were organizing the tribes south and east of Lake Tana, managed to establish very friendly contact with the Gaint people.

Many hard things have been said about the Abyssinians. Some people have found it difficult to get on with them; but it is notable that foreigners who have spent some time with them are generally happy in their company. Under the name of Abyssinian, or of Ethiopian which they themselves prefer, are included people as varied as the Amhara and the Galla; the Hararene and the Tigraian; the Shoan and the Agau. It is worth giving an individual impression of these different groups.

The Amhara racial type includes both the Amhara and the Shoan, and, to a great extent also, the Gojjami. The Amhara are the dominant racial stock of the central Ethiopian Highland rather than the ruling caste of Ethiopia. There are plenty of poor Amhara villagers. The Amhara are described as of Hamitic origin; but from the earliest times there has been a strong infusion

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Phot. W. Thesiger

Awash river, Northern Aussa

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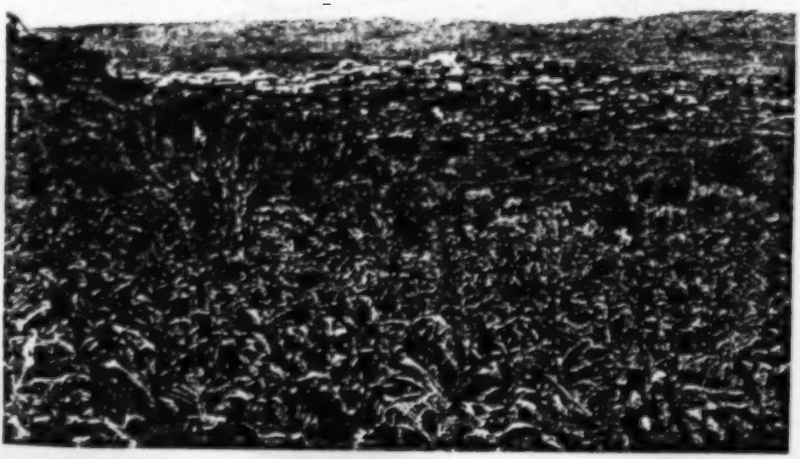

Phot. F. D. Corfield

[Facing p. 12] *Harar*

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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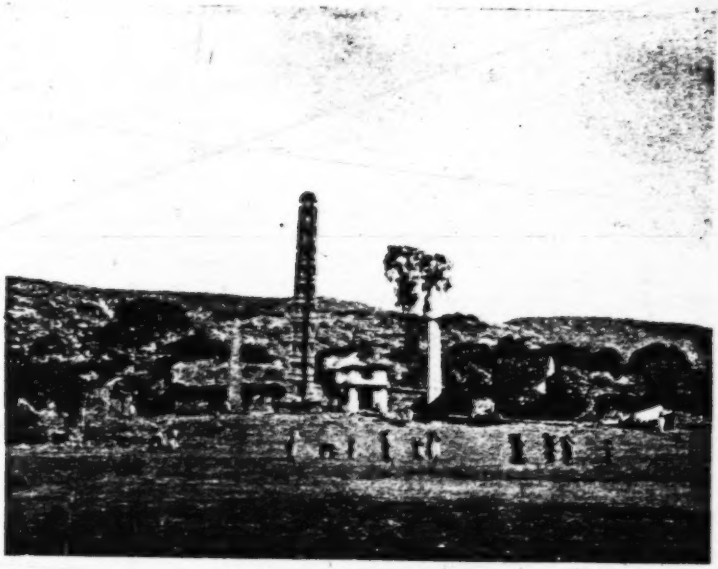

Phot. R. E. Cheesman

Aksum, monoliths

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Phot. R. E. Cheesman

Aksum, King's coronation throne and four pillars, Abunas' throne in background

(Facing p. 13)

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

THE SHOAN PLATEAU AND ITS PEOPLE: AN ESSAY IN LOCAL GEOGRAPHY

D. R. BUXTON

114 DURING THE FIFTEEN months from October 1946 to January 1948, I was working in an educational centre near Debra Berhan, an important market town and district headquarters 80 miles north-east of Addis Ababa on the Asmara road. The district was historically interesting as the hub of the old kingdom of Shoa, and it was still an important centre of Amhara population. Moreover I soon found that it contained some very remarkable topographical features. I therefore decided to devote my leisure to a detailed study of the area, which I expected to help in my educational work and also to furnish (as such studies had never, as far as I knew, been made in Ethiopia) material of some geographical interest and novelty. Unfortunately I had to leave the district before finishing what I had intended to do. But I was able to complete a large-scale compass-survey covering about a hundred square miles, working out from the village of Tebasse where I lived. This paper deals chiefly with the area shown on the map, and its Amhara population. Something will be said of the traditional ways of these people, but the formidable problems of the present day are left out of account.

The map was made, on the scale of 1: 50,000, entirely by triangulation with the prismatic compass based on points along a 5-mile section of the Italian motor-road, which runs in straight lines and is conveniently marked out with stones at 50-metre intervals. The first stage was to cover the area with a sufficient number of principal fixed points, which were mostly conspicuous trees and hill-tops. The second stage, which occupied the week-end walks of nearly twelve months, was to follow all the principal mule-tracks and streams, and all the edges of the gorges, fixing points at intervals by resection; at the same time I tried to fix all the churches accurately, but a few were missed. A comprehensive framework was thus built up, all plotting being done at home. Finally I walked all over the area again, taking with me tracings of the framework on which the remaining detail required—hill-slopes, habitations, etc.—was inserted by eye. The method gave most satisfactory results, for the area was small (only about ten miles by eleven) and the base-line relatively very long. The only serious difficulty—bewildering until I realized its cause—was the falsification of compass readings (occasionally by as much as 15°) by magnetic rocks. One could sometimes avoid this by climbing into a tree, but bearings simply could not be taken from some points which would otherwise have been most useful.

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128 To indicate relief I decided to use hachures rather than form-lines, real contouring being out of the question with the means, and in the time, at my disposal. The hachures seem to me to give a true impression to the eye of the peculiar character of this piece of country, for they bring out the contrast between the relatively slight relief of the plateau and the sudden, sensational depths of the cliff-bound gorges.

[p 157]

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Gorges of the Kasam river from the Shoan plateau

[facing p. 158]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

The fragment of country depicted by the map lies on the edge of an important section of the Shoan plateau which extends in the form of an elongated oval north-eastwards from Addis Ababa and forms the watershed between the drainage systems of the Awash and the Blue Nile. The Asmara road uses this convenient high causeway from Addis Ababa to a little beyond Debra Berhan, and would go on using it if this were possible, for the road was made to follow the plateau wherever it was flat enough. North of Debra Berhan, however, the country is tremendously cut up by deep ravines and no level plateau remains. The road is therefore forced down, at Debra Sina, to lower levels (as happens again in several places on the way to Asmara). The higher portions of this plateau lie at well over 9000 feet and constitute an undulating tract, sometimes almost flat, sometimes rather hilly, where differences in level amount to a few hundred feet only. But, on both sides, the plateau breaks up in the most spectacular fashion. To the north-west lie a series of gorges, all belonging to the Blue Nile system, opening up with extreme abruptness along an irregular front, as will be seen in the map. To the east, the plateau terminates in some places at the main escarpment which bounds the Danakil plains, an impressive drop of several thousand feet along a fault, well seen at Ankober and Debra Sina. But farther south the simplicity of this escarpment is disguised by certain tributaries of the Hawash system which, eating their way into the plateau, have formed gorges as striking as those of the Blue Nile system. These gorges, cutting back continually, must in time complete the destruction of the plateau, and produce, by the interdigitation of their deeply entrenched headstreams, the confused type of scenery already observable farther north.

The geological structure of the plateau, on which the local landscape, and especially the peculiar type of gorge developed, directly depends, seems to be extremely simple and almost the same as that which occurs over vast areas of central and northern Ethiopia. As long ago as 1870 the step-like hill sides and tremendous gorges of the Magdala area were well described by Blanford,[1] who had accompanied the Napier Expedition. He compared Abyssinian scenery with that of the western Deccan and the Western Ghats of India, but remarked that in the case of Abyssinia the special features of this type of landscape were exaggerated. He drew attention to the hill-forts or "ambas" of Abyssinia, closely corresponding to features which had likewise been used in India as forts.

Writing of the Jitta gorge near Magdala, Blanford says:

> ". . . we came suddenly on the brink of the mighty chasm in which the Jitta river runs, and to which all the minor valleys converge. Of all the grand scenery met with in Abyssinia, none equalled this wonderful gorge. It is 3500 feet deep, and looks scarcely a mile across. The sides are extremely steep, in places nearly perpendicular. The horizontal beds on both sides appear to correspond exactly; half-way down there is a well-marked terrace, evidently formed by the same bed, on both sides of the river. The bedding is very distinct.
>
> It is to be regretted that all those geologists who disbelieve in the power

[1] Blanford, 'The Geology and Zoology of Abyssinia,' p. 86, London, 1870.

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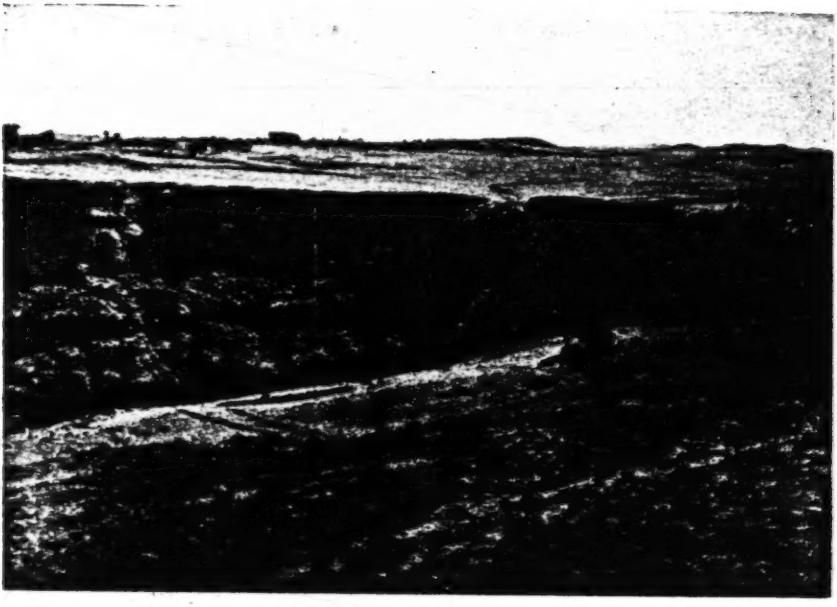
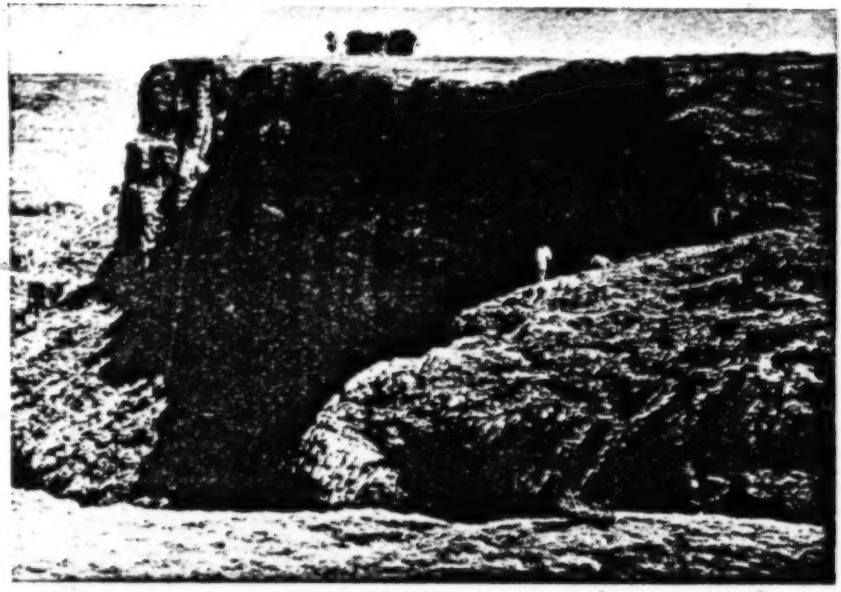


The head of the Chacha gorge



Basalt cliffs, Chacha gorge [Facing p. 159]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

of running water, and appeal to such *Dei ex machina* as marine action and waves of translation, cannot see a few such marks of the handiwork of rain and rivers as are shown by these gorges. There is not the slightest possibility, as far as I can see, of explaining their origin by any other force than that of the streams flowing in them. Any faulting or dislocation of the rocks is out of the question, there is no evidence of glacier action at any past time, and even the most fervent apostle of marine denudation would scarcely credit it with the formation of a Titanic trench three-quarters of a mile deep and very little more in breadth."

This description would apply equally to the gorges found in other parts of the Ethiopian highlands, for they are all, as far as I have seen, remarkably similar; and no geologist would now question their formation by stream erosion.

The formations of Blanford's area were called by him the Magdala group of "Traps"—an enormously thick, practically horizontal layer of lava flows. They were especially characterized by bands of trachyte, often columnar, weathering to form steep scarps. These formations are probably of late- or post-Cretaceous age, since Blanford's Ashangi Traps (upon which the Magdala group lies unconformably) were tentatively attributed by him to the Upper Cretaceous. Referring to the Magdala Traps Blanford says: "It is highly probable that the Trap rocks of Shoa belong, in part at least, to this group", his belief being based on some descriptions of Rocher d'Hericourt, who travelled in Shoa in the 1840's. My own limited observations confirm this assumption, except that in our area the most conspicuous cliffs and scarps consisted of columnar basalt, not trachyte. The area shown on the map consists of alternating harder and softer layers of volcanic rocks, including basalts, trachytes and tuffs (the latter often used, as in Kenya, for building). They dip slightly to the north-west.

The plateau, which occupies most of the sheet, lies everywhere above 9000 feet. It enjoys a temperate climate, and frosts are not uncommon in December and January. It is swept by easterly winds throughout the year, except when rain is actually threatened or falling, when it commonly turns right round to the west—a frequent occurrence during the long rainy season (June to September). The volcanic rocks have given rise to deep and potentially very fertile soils. The high plateau is mostly short grassland with very little bush, except in places protected both from wind and grazing animals, and very few trees except for small clumps of introduced Eucalyptus which mark almost every inhabited place. Owing to the scarcity of timber a dung-fuel known as *kubat* is usually burnt. At first sight the plateau appears very thinly populated but this, as will be shown, is an illusion. Anything like a village is rare, but isolated homesteads occur almost everywhere on rising ground. Nearly all this country makes good grazing for cattle, sheep and goats, and it is high enough for horses to flourish. Perhaps a third of it is more or less cultivable, though the area under cultivation in any one year is much less. Owing to cold and exposure very few crops flourish on the plateau itself, the principal ones being barley and broad beans.

The natural flora of the high plateau is not rich, though in rocky, sheltered spots a succession of attractive herbs and shrubs, including Jasmine, a yellow

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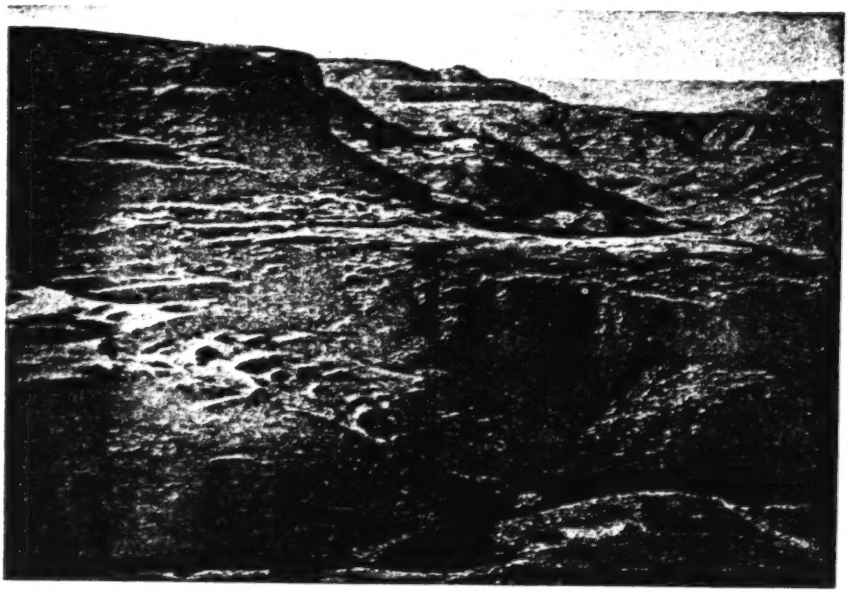


Artificial terraces and natural shelves, Dalecha gorge

133

[Facing p. 160] *Shelves at two levels, Chacha gorge*

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

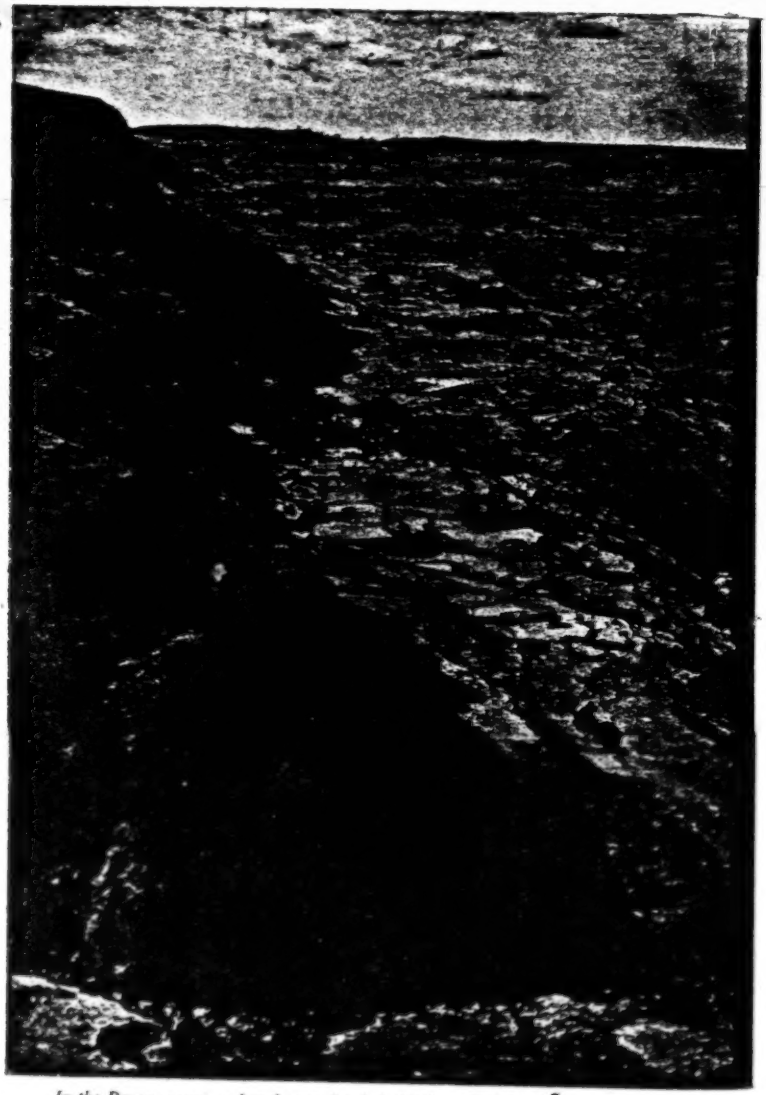
Buddleia, a large St. John's Wort and a handsome red Aloe, comes out in the course of the year. There is a very striking giant thistle (*Echinops*). During the rains lilies, orchids, and red-hot-pokers (*Kniphofia*) come up in plenty. Many typically temperate genera occur in the mountain grasslands, examples being a low-growing wild rose, ladies' mantle (*Alchemilla*) and mullein (*Verbascum*).

The lower plateau, which is the more extensive part and the only type of country seen from the motor road, is comparatively flat and therefore has naturally been traversed at all times by the main routes between north and south. The streams meander through broad, shallow valleys which, being swampy and almost impassable in the rains, are uninhabited, but much used for grazing. The main streams, following the dip of the lava beds, flow north-west. Well-marked tributaries are few, and after heavy rain the water simply drains away over the general surface. Here and there are small secondary plateaus, standing two to three hundred feet above the general level; their slopes where not too steep are well populated and their flat tops largely under cultivation. Good examples are the village areas of Fajji and Aloberet shown on the map. These small plateaus, as well as all the edges of gorges in the north-west corner of the sheet, are capped with a very hard layer of basalt which (as I found to my great annoyance when making the compass survey) contains an abundance of magnetic iron. A hundred years ago, as several travellers have recorded, these rocks were used for iron-smelting, but the industry has long since been abandoned.

As we follow the streams upwards into the higher part of the plateau the character of the country changes. The broad plains narrow down and disappear, and the streams, more recently entrenched, flow in narrow valleys and little ravines; some of them might be thought quite striking if it were not for the severe standard of comparison afforded by the huge gorges below. The country is broken up into hills, usually steep-sided and flat-topped, and rocky hogsbacks. This kind of country is to be seen in the south-east corner of the sheet. The most interesting feature here is the wedge of country left standing up between the Beressa river and its large tributary the Maka. It has been cut away sharply on either side and forms, in its narrower part, a high ridge between the valleys. One of the highest points was appropriated long ago for a fort (near the village of Dilila) and was again used as such, by both parties at different times, during the Italian régime. The other high point (a prominent hill farther to the south-east, near the edge of the sheet) has recently been crowned with a church dedicated to the archangel Gabriel.

The third and most interesting type of country is that of the gorges, which cut into the almost level plateau with such remarkable abruptness that they resemble scoopings in a lump of cheese made with a sharp-edged gouge. At the head of each gorge the streams form a series of falls, or in some cases a single big fall of 400 feet or so; even higher falls, up to 600 feet, can be seen elsewhere. Everywhere the upper walls of the gorges, which are basaltic, fall precipitously, and often form vertical cliffs several hundred feet high. So sharply defined are these gorge-edges that a heedless person walking on the plateau might, in some places, fall over them into the abyss. The walls do not however drop away continuously to the stream at the bottom; at a certain level, or in some valleys at more than one level, a horizontal shelf is

133



In the Beressa gorge, a densely populated shelf below basalt cliffs [Facing p. 161]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

133 developed. I was interested to find, when first exploring this piece of country, that the shelves were well populated, intensively cultivated, and provided with a quite surprising number of churches; facts, as pointed out below, of some historical significance.

After completing the framework of the map I made several calculations of depth in the Beressa gorge. An Abney level was used and as high angles were involved I think the results are trustworthy. They showed a depth of 1808 feet at the point marked *a*, just under 3 miles from the head of the gorge; 1985 feet at point *b*, 4 miles down; and 2170 feet at *c*, not quite 6 miles down. The average gradient from *a* to *b* was therefore about $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., from *b* to *c* about 2 per cent. The depths were measured from three points (marked 1–3), all at practically the same level, on the edge of the gorge, the height of which can be taken as about 9300 feet. The absolute level of point *c* is therefore about 7130 feet, and this is almost the lowest point on the sheet. Measurements show that the depth of this gorge, enormously impressive though it is, is not more than one-fifth of its breadth. Although relatively deeper ones no doubt exist, I cannot help being highly sceptical of Rocher d'Hericourt's report of a ravine "14 leagues north-west of Angolala" which he alleged to be 1254 metres deep and only 800 broad!

Four separate gorges figure on the map. The two middle ones, formed by the Beressa and Dalecha rivers, which enclose between them the cliff-encircled plateau of Choli, can be seen to join within 4 to 5 miles of Debra Berhan. It might be supposed that the other two gorges were destined to join the same system within a short distance, but this does not happen. If the small-scale Italian map is to be trusted, the Gunagunit (north-east corner of the sheet) joins the Beressa system some 20 miles away, and the Chacha (of which the north-western gorge is a tributary) nearly 30 miles away. These junctions are approximately north of Debra Berhan; afterwards the river bends away north-westwards to join a main tributary of the Blue Nile. As might be expected, these independent gorge-systems running approximately parallel to each other proved most confusing. Between the adjacent systems one sees long, narrow strips of residual plateau, perfectly flat-topped, sometimes so narrow as to stand up like a wall between one valley and the next. The Tallak Amba plateau, partly shown in the north-west of the sheet, is an example. On the other side of the sheet a still narrower neck, followed by the Tegulet path, separates the Beressa and Gunagunit systems. Following this route to the north, off the sheet, one finds that for some distance the plateau has been cut right away: one descends about 600 feet to a point where the shelves in two adjacent valleys practically coalesce, being separated only by a rocky barrier a few feet high. Then one climbs again to a narrow slip of plateau on whose summit, flat as a table-top, stands an important church (Zendegur Ghiorghis). Still farther north this narrows down to a sinuous rampart between the valleys, and eventually broadens once more to form a substantial isolated plateau, which appeared in the distance to be almost inaccessible. Another remarkable feature, jutting out between the Dalecha and the small tributary which next joins the Beressa, is shown near the northern border of the sheet and will be described later.

This region is the heart of the old Shoan kingdom and many places included

[11] [i.e., the RIVER gorges. -Analyst]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

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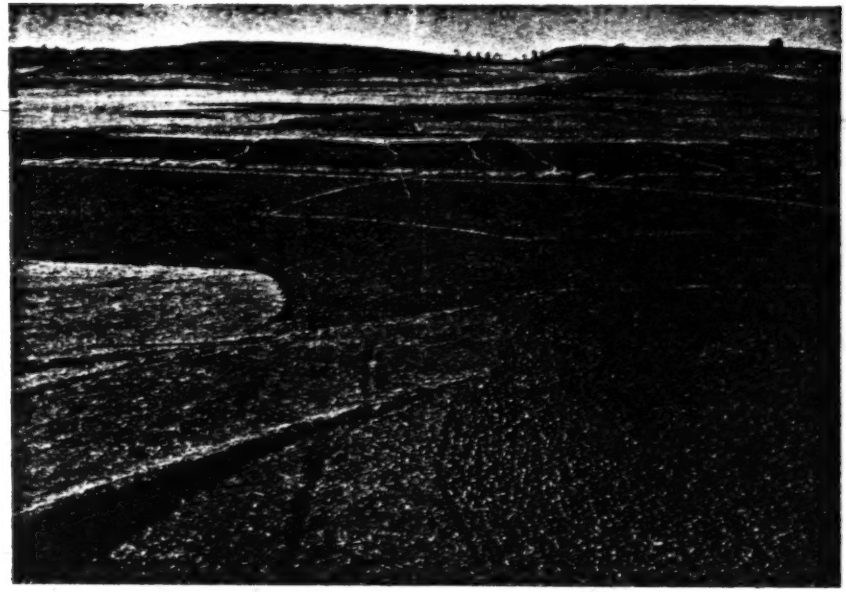

Irrigated land, Atakilt

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[illegible]
716

The ceremony of Timkat (Epiphany), near Debra Berhan

[Facing p. 171]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

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346

[End map II-A]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

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787
712
361
312
346

[End map II-B]

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

ten or twelve men, who did not fear passing such steep 484
mountains, where it was said that there were multitudes of
robbers. Thus we went away, divided, with the oxen and
negroes, with their burdens in front of us, going forward on
our course. We travelled through very wild mountains, 133
over ascents and descents, and very bad stony road. Most [491]
of the woods of these mountains are very large wild olive [131]
trees, from which good olive trees could be made. Issuing
from these mountain ranges we entered into dry channels,
which in winter time are great rivers, that is to say, as long
as the showers last. As soon as the shower is finished the
river is dry. These channels have on each side of them
very high mountains, as rugged as those we had left behind.
In these river beds there are large clumps of unknown
trees, amongst which, near the rivers, there are a few wild [131]
palm trees. We slept this night in a river bed with little
water in it.

CAP. XVII.—*How we passed a great mountain in which there were many apes, on a Saturday, and on the following Sunday we said mass in a village called Zalote.*

On the following day we again crossed another very high
and rugged mountain ridge, over which we could not make
our way, either on the mules or on foot. In this mountain 136
there are many animals of different species, and an infinite
quantity of apes in herds: and they are not generally spread
over the mountain, but only where there are clefts and holes
in the rock; they are not found in quantities less than two
or three hundred, and beyond that number. If there is
any flat ground above these precipices, that is their
promenade, and no stone remains that they do not turn,
and they scrape the earth so that it looks as though it were
tilled. They are very large, the size of sheep, and from the
middle upwards hairy like lions.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

000 574 middle upwards hairy like lions. We passed the mountain, and went to sleep at the foot of a village called Zalote. There will be about four or five leagues from this place to the monastery from which we set out. We halted by a running river of very good water, and when our baggage had been unloaded we went to the said village to see a very honourable gentleman, the headman of it—a very old man, who was lodged here very honourably. He gave us a very [262] hospitable reception, giving us many fowls cooked in butter, and much mead, and he sent us a very large fat cow to the place of our halt. On the following day, which was Sunday, we went to say our mass at the church of the village, which is called St. Michael, a poor church, both the fabric and the ornaments. There are in this church three 793 married priests and three others, deacons,[1] that is to say, of 796 the gospel, and all are necessary, for no less can say mass. This honourable captain I met with later as a friar in the monastery of Bisan, and he left his condition and revenues to his sons, who were honourable persons; and I saw him stand at the gate outside, and he did not enter within the monastery, and there he received the communion with the novices, and when the offices of the church were ended he remained in honour with the provincial. On this Sunday we set out again in the afternoon, because the country ● 133 people who conducted us wished it so. Here we began to travel through flat country fallows and tillage, in the fashion of Portugal, and the bushes which are between the tilled lands are all wild olives, without other trees. We slept by some running streams, between many good villages.

[1] *Zagonaes.* Ethiopian corruption of *diakonos.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

In this country there are in some parts very flat lands, and in others mountainous; and altogether they are fruitful lands. There are no snowy ranges, but withal severe frosts, especially in the flat lands. In all the lands there is great breeding of cattle. 133 [231]

He says that he did not see the river Nile, and he reached to two days' journey from it, and the days' journey which they went were small ones, namely, four or five leagues, a little more or less. But some of those in his company reached its source, and they say that it rises in the Kingdom of Gojame, and its source is in great lakes, and where it rises there are islands, and thence it commences its course and goes to Egypt.

The time when the Nile rises in Egypt is (as they say) from the 15th day of September and later, and in all October; and the reason of this is, because the winter of Ethiopia begins from the middle of June to the middle of September, and on account of the great rains which take place in it without this winter ever changing, the Nile overflows in Egypt at that time.

It is the general custom of Prester John and all the people for no man on horseback to pass a church, but before they reach it they dismount, and so pass it, and lead their beasts by the bridles, and after passing they mount. 492 576

When Prester John and all his people travel, the altar and the altar stone on which mass is said, all goes on the shoulders of the priests as on a litter, and there go eight priests with each altar by turns, that is, four and four: and a priest goes in front of them with a thurible, and further in front a zagonay ringing a bell, and all the people go away from the road, and those that are on horses dismount, and show reverence to the altar stone or altar. 484

There is no grape wine there, more than in two houses, where it is made publicly, namely, in the house of Prester John and the house of the Patriarch Abima Marcos; and if 273

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

rains of Naasse and Hamlie, it never overflows at the springs, 361
nor do the fountains seem larger. He remembered the accession of Hatze Yasous to the throne, and was about 80 years old. The east side of the Nile is less barren than the west side. Aformasha is not barren.

Singular custom. The Betwudet (in Habesh), upon the 651
death of any Wiziro, is obliged to pay the expences of the 766
ceremony, called Misle, which amounts to 100 oxen, 3000 loaves of wheat bread, 20 jars hydromel, wood, &c. the whole about 60 ounces of gold. The ceremony is this: A sort of figure, resembling the defunct, is placed upon horseback, in his usual dress, and so carried in procession about the outer court of the palace, with the royal standard (sendick) carried before it, and the nagareet beating. This is called, in this country, "burying with sendick and nagareet;" for which the Betwudet has 1200 ardeb of wheat yearly out of the Attekolla.

The route of the Islam merchants, S. is by two ways, with 487
loaden asses, 8 or 9 miles per day. The way by Gojam is performed in 30 days to Sebou, and thence for other 10 to Narea. The Kibby, or Zebee, rises in Narea. Coffee, of different kinds, grows there in abundance, and the Galla feed on it. They use the lex talionis, but their internal justice is strict. They are very scrupulous of oaths: Wauke Laftan, by heaven and earth, is one of the most solemn. There are three races of Galla, the Guangoul in Angot, north-east of Begemder; Mahomet Ali, another farther west than the Guangoul, towards Amhara; and a third, Mahomet, brother of Lubo, west of Amhara. The rest are pagans; but when converted are said to be better Christians than the native Abyssinians.

Mahabar Selasse is four commodious days journey from 133
Gondar, in the line of Tchemmera and Tenkel. Near it pass the rivers Shimfa and Gandova, the last of which has several very high cataracts; it joins to the Shankala, and is about two days journey from Tchemmera. Both rivers fall into the Nile.

The river Bashilo separates Amhara from Begemder; the Mashilla, a river of Gojam, and the river Nefasse, fall into the Nile at the same place. In the country of the Galla west of Damot, across or west of the Abay, there is little

[p. 61]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

133 water, and near the banks of the river the country is desert.

651 Damot pays 800 ounces (wakea) of gold; formerly 1000. Gojam 80 ounces, and 70 mules. Lasta 1000 ounces; these last years it pays no more, being at present annexed to Begemder. Tigre pays 400 ounces in salt and cotton cloths. Walcait 1500 ounces in cotton cloths.

131 361 The latitude of Adderghey is 13° 24′ 56″; of Macara, on Lamalmen, 13° 6′ 8″; of Gondar, 12° 34′ 30″; of Emfras, 12° 12′ 38″; of the fountains, 10° 58′ 58″.

000 *Note at Lobeia.*—The Arabs are fond of music, especially vocal; for they have no instruments but a kind of flute, of the size of a German flute, which gives a wild and not unmelodious sound, and the cymbal or drum, with ten pieces fixed to its sides, which is chiefly used in cadence in dancing, or for symphonies. Their vocal music, or songs, are upon first hearing disagreeable; but it rarely happens that one who has a good ear is not soon fond of them. They are all upon love; at least I never heard any that had war for their subject; some have religion, and are sung by their Shekhs, or saints. The former have effects upon their hearers nearly as extravagant as the ancient music produced. They have no music in parts, and have absolutely no idea of harmonical composition.

[pp. 81-end have not been processed for the files. - Analyst]

[p. 62]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

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[P.ii]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

left Gondar for Shoa, where he became a favorite at the court of Emperor Menelik.

Alaqā Gabra Hānnā was not the only one to leave Gondar in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Conditions there had become increasingly miserable. In 1866 Tēwodros, angered by the opposition of the Gondarē clergy to his plans for unifying the country through a standing national army, turned his wrath against them into a fearful pillage of the churches of Gondar.* The next emperor, Takla Giyorgis, worked feverishly to rebuild Gondar during his few years in power (1869–72). It was to no avail. In 1887 a large army of dervishes invaded Ethiopia from the Sudan and sacked Gondar, destroying it more completely than had Tēwodros.

The priests and monks who survived carried on. Gondar remained an important center for instruction in *aquāquām* and *tergum*, though Gojjam became more important for the study of *qenē* and other schools in Bagemder and Tigre for the study of *zēmā*. The civil order, however, was thoroughly demoralized. Gondarēs left in large numbers for the countryside or made their way to Lāstā and more distant provinces.

At the time of the dervish invasion, the churchmen of Gondar appealed to Emperor Yohānnes for succor. The text of their message—the last utterance from the old capital—began as follows:

> O master! The heathen have come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Gondar in heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Dambiyā; and there was none to bury them.[11]

Yohānnes responded at once. It was to revenge defenseless Gondar that he led the expedition against the dervishes which cost him his life, thereby leaving the way open for the accession of the House of Manz.

The Role of Manz

Manz is a rugged rural area of about 850 square miles located in the northeast horn of Shoa Province.[12] It lies on a broad plateau at a height of ten thousand feet above sea level. This plateau is crosscut by a number of rivers which flow westerly to become part of the great Blue Nile Basin. The valleys of the rivers are flanked by fairly abrupt cliffs, which make travel from one part of Manz to another slow going. These rivers form boundaries between the geographical divisions within Manz, which is divided into three major parts: Māmā Meder in the south, Lālo Meder in the center, and Gērā Meder in the north. The entire area of Manz is itself bounded by steep mountains.[13]

* Fortunately he preserved hundreds of manuscripts from Gondar's churches which eventually found their way to the British Museum after the Napier Expedition against Tēwodros in 1868.

[MANZ]

29 / *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

The history and customs of Manz are more obviously related to its geography than is the case with Gondar. The encircling wall of mountains has been a source of isolation and protection, two factors of great moment in the history of the area. Peculiar eating and clothing habits have developed in response to a climate which, owing to the altitude of Manz and its position at the edge of an escarpment that leads down to a desert of the Rift Valley, is one of the coldest in Ethiopia. The temperature often approaches the freezing point, and in the colder months (October and November) standing in the sunshine at high noon is no defense against a shrill wind that pierces the bones.

Barley is the only crop that thrives in the highest parts of Manz, though wheat, beans, peas, and chick-peas grow in the slightly lower altitudes. But *tĕff*, the grain preferred by Abyssinians for the preparation of their staple food —a kind of pancake known as *ĭnjarā*—cannot be cultivated at those heights, so the Manzē typically eats *ĭnjarā* made of barley.

Sheep are a major item in the Manz economy. The average farm has a herd of 100 to 150 sheep, which provide a heavy wool as well as the Manzē's favorite meat. This wool is used to make the *bānnā*, a warm blanket which is wrapped around the body and constitutes the standard dress of the Manzē. The *bānnā* distinguishes him from other Abyssinians, who wear a white cotton toga called *shammā*. Wealthier men wear the *barnos*, a tailored cape made of dark wool. Manzē wool is also used for the weaving of rugs which ornament the homes of the well-to-do.

No dyes are used in working their wool, so a crowd of Manzēs in natural-colored *bānnā* seen at a distance resembles a flock of their sheep. This is one of the touches contributing to the impressive aesthetic unity of the Manz landscape. The effect is also produced by the fact that the Manzē's house is built of stone, the same stone that is seen everywhere on the terrain; and its conical roof is made of thatch, which makes the roof look like the piles of grain in the fields. The churches are also built of stone with thatched conical roofs. Everything one sees in Manz bespeaks a harmony with the natural environment.

The cold climate of Manz is invigorating. It prevents food from spoiling quickly and discourages diseases which flourish in lower altitudes. The Manzē boasts that his climate keeps people healthy and gives them long lives, and indeed it is not uncommon to find men sprightly in their eighties and nineties. But only the hardy survive, for life there is as rugged as the land, and the people—like their landscape—are stony, bleak, and full of dark recesses.

Manz does not occupy so conspicuous a place in Ethiopian history as Gondar. Indeed, most books on Ethiopia do not even mention the area. While

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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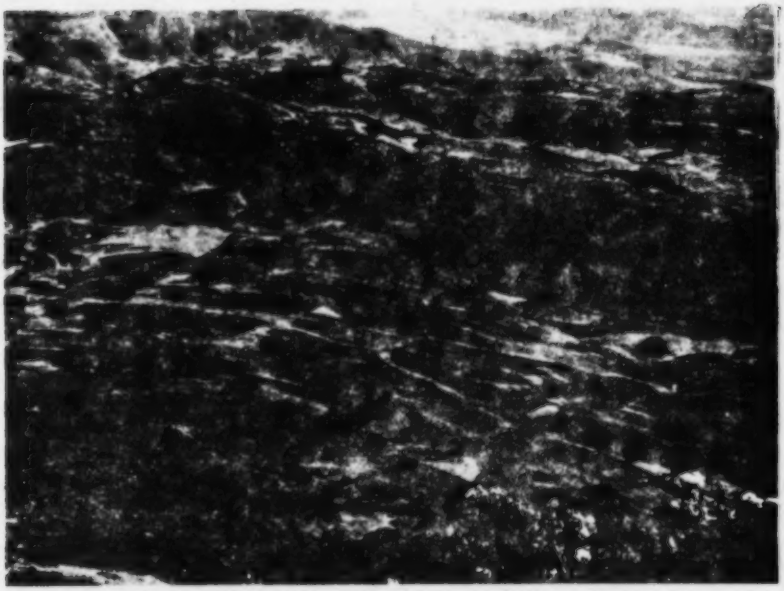

FIG. 6.—*The Amhara countryside*

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FIG. 7.—*An Amhara homestead, Manz*

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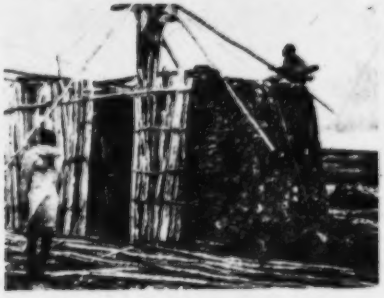

[D-46-A]

FIG. 8.—*Building a house*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 9.—*The weekly market*

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[P.46-B]

FIG. 10.—*The market: weighing cotton*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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233

FIG. 14.—*A group of shepherds*

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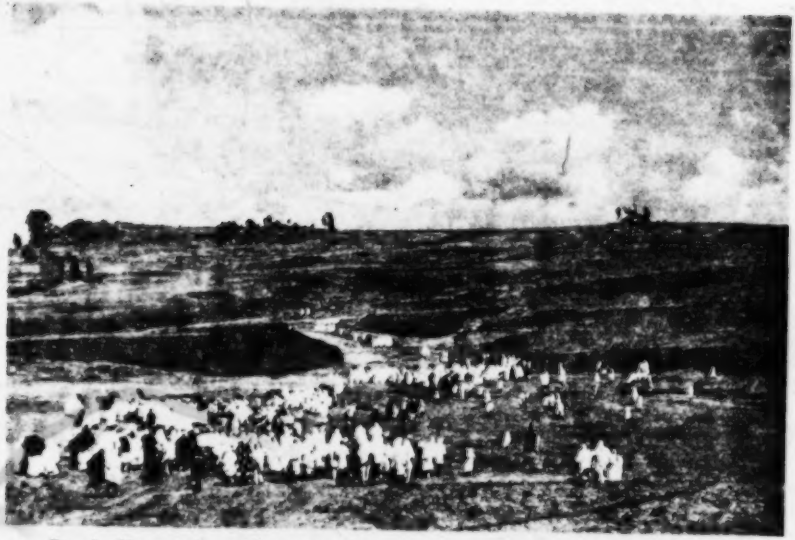
492

FIG. 15.—*Threshing time*

[P.78-B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5



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996

FIG. 16.—*The procession on Tïmqat Day*

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302
534
996

FIG. 17.—*Tïmqat procession: detail*

[P. 110-A]

*753 *755 *756 776 als who are not members of his hadra, and, more frequently, provides divinatory services for clients.

For each of its members, the hadra, comprising its human and zar members, becomes the group within which her most important social relationships beyond the family are found. In a medical context, the hadra develops into an exclusive and self-sufficient group, in which the bala-zars trace all of their serious physical ailments to the displeasure of their zars, and find all necessary prophylactic, diagnostic, and therapeutic assistance in the hadra leader.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF SECULAR HEALERS IN RURAL BEGEMDER

131 • 133 Within the 74,200 square kilometers of Begemder Province are found a diversity of physical conditions, from the hot and parched western lowlands, through the fertile and temperate highland plateau, ascending to the cold and empty mountain reaches of Ras Dashan. The people of Begemder divide its lands into three ecological zones, as indicated by map 1.

Kola lands are located between elevations of 600 and 1800 meters. The highlander considers kola to be a *[192] disagreeable region; it is unhealthful because of malaria (often referred to as yisudan basiyta, "the Sudanese disease), and unpleasant in its excessive heat. Preferred

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Preferred
[243] cereals cannot be grown here, instead sorghum, finger millet, and white tef (Eragrostis teff; an indigenous, [635] tiny-grained cereal) are produced. Moreover, the civil administration of the kola is less effective than in the highlands. Of the three zones, kola is the most sparse- [162] ly populated, and the only one to contain a substantial [563] indigenous non-Hamitic population. These are a Nilotic [567] people, horticulturalists living on the province's western periphery. Highlanders refer to them by a putative tribal nomer, "Shankella", and, until recent times, obtained their domestic slaves from this population. Even now, Nilotes living in the highlands are popularly known as bariya, "slave".

Weyna dega lands are located between 1800 and 3000 [136] meters. This is parkland beyond the range of the ano- [243] pheles mosquito, and ideal for growing preferred cereals, [231] wheat and red teff. Here, as in the other zones, agriculture is complemented by the raising of sheep, goats, and chickens for food; cattle for meat, milk, and plowing; donkeys to carry burdens across the broken plateau lands; and horses and mules as mounts.

Dega lands are the sections of the plateau which [243] extend beyond the 3000 meter mark. In their lower reaches, wheat and red teff are grown, but at higher altitudes [233] barley is the dominant cereal. The lands above 4000 meters cannot be cultivated, although some are used for grazing.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

753 grazing. Both highland zones are considered ideal for
131 human habitation. While residents of the dega zone oc-
133 casionally comment on what they regard as the uncomfor-
821 table summer heat of the weyna dega, at the same time it is acknowledged that the rainy season (kiramt) is more burdensome in the dega. The rains last from May to September and are marked by temperatures in the mid-thirties in dega lands and perhaps ten to fifteen degrees warmer in the weyna dega. This season is regarded as a particularly bad time for kurtimat (rheumatoid complaints) whose severity is considered greatest in the dega zone. Epidemiologically, the dega is also associated with a relatively high incidence of yinifas baŝiyta ("the wind disease"), an ailment described in Chapter One.

131 Although reliable population estimates are lacking,
101 the weyna dega and dega zones contain perhaps 85% of
161 Begemder's people. These rural highlands are occupied
197 by five ethnic groups, racially indistinguishable from
144 one another and, with an exception, now speaking a common Semetic languase, Amharic. The Amhara are the most numerous of Begemder's highland peoples, and extend into the provinces of Gojam and Shoa, to the south. Within the Begemder highlands, they occupy the area south of latitude $13^{0}30'$. North of this line live the Tigre, a related people who speak a cognate language, Tigrinya.
101 Both Amhara and Tigre are Coptic Christians, and from
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